



Youth Awards

President's Environmental Youth Awards

Introduction

Since 1971, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has sponsored the President's Environmental Youth Awards (PEYA) program which recognizes young people across America for projects which demonstrate their commitment to the environment. Young people in all fifty states and U.S. territories are invited to participate annually in the PEYA program, which offers youth, individually and collectively, an opportunity to become an environmental force within their communities. The program encourages individuals, school classes, schools, summer camps, public interest groups, and youth organizations to promote local environmental awareness and to channel this awareness into positive community involvement. The PEYA program has two components: the regional certificate program and the national awards competition.



Regional Certificate Program

Regional certificates are awarded by EPA's ten regional offices year round. Therefore, applications may be submitted to the regional offices at any time throughout the year. All participants in the regional certification program receive certificates signed by the President of the United States honoring them for their efforts in environmental protection.

National Awards Competition

One outstanding project from each of the ten EPA regional offices is selected for national recognition. National individual project winners, or one representative from a national award-winning group project, along with one project sponsor, are honored by EPA Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Judging Criteria

Regional award panels judge environmental projects based on several factors. These factors include the environmental need for the project, the project's ability to reach its goals, the long-term environmental benefits of the project, the positive environmental impact on the local community, and the extent to which the project was designed, coordinated, and implemented due to youth initiative in the project.

Role of the Sponsor

Each project must have an adult sponsor who plays an important role in helping a young person or groups of young people carry out their projects and apply for the awards. The sponsor can be a teacher, youth group advisor, summer camp counselor, or community leader. Young people must work closely with the sponsor throughout the project and application process.

Application Deadline

Applications for the regional certificate program may be sent to the EPA regional office where the project is located at any time throughout the year. To participate in the annual national awards competition, projects must be completed and applications must be postmarked by July 31st of the award year. All applications must be mailed to the appropriate EPA regional office. Contact the regional office that represents your community for an application or more information about the program.

Examples of Past Winners

1995 Winner

Deering High School

Earth Science Class, Portland, Maine

Motor Oil Pollution Prevention: "M.O.P.P. It Up"

By surveying motorists, service stations, car rental agencies, and the local American Automobile Association, members of an honors earth science class discovered that people in their community were unaware that used motor oil could be recycled, and that the oil, if not disposed of properly, could harm nearby groundwater. The students conducted a campaign to inform drivers about the potential for motor oil pollution and locations where used oil could be recycled. They also developed and produced posters and brochures, wrote articles for the local news media, and created a public service announcement for television. Local businesses partnered with the students by accepting the used motor oil for recycling.



1996 Winner

Becker Elementary School

The Green Classroom, Austin, Texas

S.E.A.R.C.H. for TASS Keys

Four hundred third and fourth graders used a hands-on approach to learn about preserving the environment while boosting their scores on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TASS) test. With assistance from Austin Foresters, the students conducted a neighborhood tree census by sending out student-prepared "report cards" on the tallest and shortest neighborhood trees and those with the largest or smallest circumference. The students also studied the water quality of Bouldin Creek, gathering and analyzing data on soil quality, energy conservation, and community water use. The students were tested about their assignments with questions to measure TASS competency. The results demonstrated that science, reading, mathematics, and other academic standards can be advanced in tandem with environmental education efforts.



1997 Winner

Patrick Bennett

Soldotna, Alaska

Caring for the Kenai River: A Computer Program

As a high school freshman, Patrick Bennett designed a Kenai River multi-media computer program and a World Wide Web page so the public can learn more about the Kenai River and understand how to use its resources in a sustainable way. Located in South-Central Alaska, the Kenai Peninsula is home to a vast array of ecosystems and animal species. Important to the peninsula's economy is both fishing and tourism. The program contains information for tourists and Alaskans on the challenges and benefits that are associated with the Kenai Peninsula's fishing and tourist economy and their impact on the Kenai River. The program was developed for the Kenai River, but much of the information also applies to the nation's other rivers and watersheds. Access this program at < <http://www.kpbsd.k12.ak.us/ss/quest/student/kenai.html>> .



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*Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New
Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont*

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EPA REGION 3

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For additional information, visit the World Wide Web at
<http://www.epa.gov/enviroed>